

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Following a meeting this evening with USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, Congressmen Jim Costa (D-Fresno) Dennis Cardoza (D-Atwater), David Scott (D-GA), and Collin Peterson (D-MN), Costa released this statement.

“The largest dairy state in the nation is California, and it is vital for Secretary Vilsack to understand the problems that our dairy farmers are facing today. With domestic and global demand for U.S. dairy products declining, combined with producer costs at all-time highs, we need Secretary Vilsack to exercise his authority to try and bring a sense of order to this situation.

“Today’s meeting with Secretary Vilsack was a first step in addressing the problems plaguing the California dairy industry. The Secretary assured us he will use the administrative authority that is available to him to implement and utilize the programs available to alleviate the current dairy crisis in California, as well as throughout the nation.

“In addition, Congressman Cardoza and I spoke with our colleagues, Subcommittee Chairman of Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Congressman Scott and Congressman Peterson, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, about the need to address the long-term problems facing our nation’s dairy industry. The Secretary understands the financial meltdown brought on by an imbalance of supply vs. demand, coupled with record high costs of production causing dairy farmers to lose money each month. The state and federal marketing orders are simply not supply-side sensitive enough to respond to the cyclical over-production of dairy products, therefore structural change is required.

“Finally, I will continue to work closely with my Valley colleagues, new Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack and California’s milk industry to help our dairy farmers through this difficult time.”